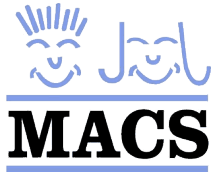
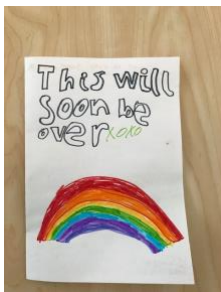


How are you doing?

Stories from the frontline



Mearns After-School Care Service



What services are you currently providing? We are providing a childcare service for the children of keyworkers in 2 childcare hubs.

On average how many children do you have on a daily basis? We have between 2 to 5 children on a daily basis. We have had up to 15 on one week in one of the hubs. Shifts for parents change very quickly so it is sometimes difficult to plan anything in advance.

Are you part of a co-ordinated partnership with your local authority or does demand from key worker parents allow you to stay open independently? Macs have a few enquiries from parents that use our services but the local council have asked if MACS could provide a before and after school service in childcare hubs. We work closely with the Council who are now partly subsidising some of the childcare places. We subsidise the rest. The children can only come to us if they are a priority category in the school hubs.

How is it working under COVID-19 guidance/restrictions? It has been working well. We do have to continually remind the younger children about Social Distancing. WE need to ensure only one goes into the toilet at a time. Outsid play in good weather helps as some staff are forest kindergarten trained. We get updates to our risk assessments almost daily although that has slowed down now. It was harder at the beginning whle we were learning everything.

What difficulties are you facing? Getting the younger children to remember the social distancing rules. Also resources for activities are limited and can take longer to purchase due to the lockdown restrictions. We need to clean all the toys and surfaces regularly and they need to be disinfected or steam cleaned. Finding someone who will supply PPE has been challenging too. We had to ask parents to supply food as it was difficult to shop, especially at the beginning. The schools had nothing that they could share with us. The staff miss their own children and the children miss having friends that they know to play with. All ages are in together which means you have to think of things that suit all ages.

What are the positives? The positives are working in a new school, meeting new children and parents, having lower numbers allows us to get to know the children/parents a bit better. Mostly we feel we are doing our part supporting keyworkers. The children in the hubs are learning the rules better than those children at home.

How is staff morale? Staff member morale is upbeat from those working, happy to be back at work to support keyworkers and children through this pandemic and feel like they are doing their bit to help. It also has helped staff who are working get back into some sort of normality. We do enjoy meeting the new children that have started in the hub and feel that due to having lower numbers we can get to know them better.

How is the children's morale? The children have been great, they have been coming in feeling happy and want to have fun and play, take part in arts, craft and want to explore out in the playground. Some of the children do not attend the school we are in, but they have enjoyed being in a different school.

Any feedback from parents? The parents are happy that MACS have opened a service in the hub we are using as it not normally a school we provide for but one the Council asked us to help with. Parents were worried about how they where going to get before and after school care for their children. Parents have said their child or children have enjoyed coming.